In 2016 both the Brexit campaign in the UK and the US elections have brought the notion of a new age of post-truth into sharp focus. Alongside it, alternative facts, fake news and similar terms have become more and more commonplace. Expertise appears to be discredited, gut feeling at least as important as facts, and facts themselves no longer valid and reliable. How and why did we get to this point, are there ways out of it, and has it really become impossible to distinguish between facts and their different interpretations?

This module will track philosophical, sociological and political concepts that shaped today's competing world views, beginning with the enlightenment. The module's core hypothesis is that since the late nineteenth century the focus of academic attention shifted more and more from the observation of the world around us (realism) to the way in which our societal and individual predispositions, the unconscious part of our brain and our emotions influence how we perceive and interpret that world. We will follow this trajectory starting with Nietzsche via Freud's psychoanalysis and Popper and Kuhn's theories of scientific progress up to poststructuralist and postmodern positions which appear to aid a complete relativism in which anything goes. The module will conclude with recent pushbacks against these tendencies, including calls for a new realism and neuro-scientific findings regarding the interaction of perception and emotion. All of these concepts will be interrogated with an eye on how they relate to issues of morality and fairness concepts that are conspicuously absent among post-truthers and bullshitters. Finally, we will look at the significant impact of the internet on our behaviour and our ways to gain and assess information.

In the first class of each week we will discuss a philosophical or sociological concept while looking at how it is embodied by a piece of music—usually an opera—in the second hour (after all, I'm a music lecturer). Room will be given to questions raised by students with regard to issues they are particularly concerned about.

What will I learn?

Learning Outcomes:
- Students will enhance their ability to identify and evaluate facts as opposed to opinions/interpretations
- Recognise what lies behind individual positions in public discourses
- Reassess the values of rational thinking and emotional engagement in relation to different types of discursive situations
- Gain a deepened understanding of a range of intellectual concepts such as enlightened rationality, positivism, objectivity, relativism, poststructuralism, postmodernism, post-truth, bullshit and others
- Gain insights into how music is shaped by societal forces and can in turn shape it on occasion
- Understand the way in which the internet has changed our ways to access and process information, our behaviour in relation to others in quasi-anonymous contexts, and how we are constantly manipulated by it

How will I learn?

Student Effort Hours:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Effort Type</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autonomous Student</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Am I eligible to take this module?

Requirements, Exclusions and Recommendations

Not applicable to this module.

How will I be assessed?

Module Requisites and Incompatibilities

Not applicable to this module.
### Assessment Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Open Book</th>
<th>Component Scale</th>
<th>Must Pass Component</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay: Discussion of one of a range of given problems / topics (2,500 words)</td>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Graded</td>
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<td>Multiple Choice Questionnaire: Multiple Choice Test</td>
<td>Week 11</td>
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<td>Graded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal: Reflective Journal</td>
<td>Coursework (End of Trimester)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Graded</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple Choice Questionnaire (Short): Multiple Choice Test</td>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Graded</td>
<td>No</td>
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* Carry forward of passed components

**What happens if I fail?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result In</th>
<th>Terminal Exam</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>No</td>
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</table>

**Assessment feedback**

- Feedback individually to students, on an activity or draft prior to summative assessment
- Feedback individually to students, post-assessment
- Group/class feedback, post-assessment

**Reading List**

- Post-Truth, Politics and Music

**Bibliography**


Arnold Schoenberg, Moses und Aron


Richard Strauss, Salome


Arnold Schoenberg, Moses und Aron

György Ligeti, Clocks and Clouds

Luciano Berio, Sinfonia
? C. Catherine Losada, Between Modernism and Postmodernism: Strands of Continuity in Collage Compositions by Rochberg, Berio, and Zimmermann, Music Theory Spectrum 31/1 (Spring 2009), 57-100.

John Adams, The Death of Klinghoffer

The Robin Thicke / Pharrell Williams plagiarism case
Students are asked to find online sources on this case (which revolves around the song Blurred Lines) themselves and establish the relevant facts, as well as develop their own view of the issue and the ruling.

### When is this module offered?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Offering 1</td>
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